



Ceann Seirbhíse, Cúram Príomhúil
Baile Átha Cliath Theas, Cill Dara & Iarthar Chill Mhantáin
– Cúram Sláinte Pobail
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20/03/2024

Deputy Gino Kenny
Dail Eireann
Dublin 2.

PQ ref 48912/23

To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question Nos. 1384 of 18 April 2023, 177 of 16 November 2022 and 860 of 22 March 2022, for an update on recruitment of public health nurses for Lucan, Newcastle and Rathcoole areas of Dublin as promised by his department; and if he will provide updated information and confirmation of recruitment.

Dear Deputy Kenny,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for a response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Health Service Executive can confirm that the Public Health Nursing Service Dublin West is experiencing a significant shortage of Public Health Nurses, Community Registered Nurses, Healthcare Assistants and Clinical Nurse Specialists. There has been detailed planning of work at site-specific levels to proactively manage staff retirements, staff transfers, staff vacancies, maternity leave and sick leave (short and long term) on front-line services.

Following the above, the Public Health Nursing service in Lucan and Newcastle has moved to a Priority 1 (P1) service as per the National Caseload Prioritisation Procedure for the PHN Service since 2022. This means that services at P2 to P3 will not be provided. This decision will regretfully impact the delivery of services to service users. Site-specific Contingency Plans continue to be refined monthly. Reconfiguration and integration of services, reorganisation of existing work and redeployment of staff will continue to underpin the department's contingency plans. Every effort has been made to recruit staff however the department has not been in a position to fill existing vacancies. Presently there is a recruitment pause, that further impacts on the delivery of care. The department was unsuccessful in recruiting student PHNs for the 2023-2024 programme. The department is forwarding a request to fill 20 positions for the 2024-2025 campaign. The statistics received to date suggest that there may be an insufficient number of applicants to fill current PHN vacancies. The CHO has also engaged with the Integrated Graduate Nurse Scheme and regretfully was unable to fill positions through this programme.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but if you have any queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Kearney
Head of Primary Care
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